

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of validating an e-ticket, comprising the steps of:
 - a) sending the e-ticket from an initial receiving server S_i to a plurality of servers including S_i , wherein each server returns an answer indicative of whether that server previously answered an inquiry for the e-ticket;
 - b) collecting the identities of the answering servers in an answer set;
 - c) broadcasting the e-ticket and the answer set to the plurality of servers, if ~~at least~~ one server previously answered an inquiry for the e-ticket; and
 - d) collecting the identity of any server S_k broadcasting the e-ticket and an associated answer set in a second answer set upon receipt of the broadcast; and
 - e) rejecting the e-ticket if the answer set is a subset of the second answer set, wherein steps a), b), c), and d), and e) are performed to validate the e-ticket ~~and wherein step d) is repeated as long as S_i has not received its own broadcast and there is no server S_k in the second answer set such that the associated answer set is a subset of the second answer set.~~
2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein step b) is performed until a majority of servers has answered.
3. (canceled)
4. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
 - e) accepting the e-ticket if S_i receives its own broadcast and the answer set is a subset of the second answer set.
5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
~~rejecting the e-ticket if S_i has received its own broadcast and the answer set is not a subset of the second answer set.~~

6. (currently amended) A method of validating an e-ticket, comprising the steps of:
 - a) sending the e-ticket from an initial receiving server S_i to a plurality of servers including S_i , wherein each server returns an answer indicative of whether that server previously answered an inquiry for the e-ticket;
 - b) collecting the identities of the answering servers in an answer set;
 - c) broadcasting the e-ticket and the answer set to the plurality of servers, if ~~at least~~ one server previously answered an inquiry for the e-ticket;
 - d) collecting the identity of any server S_k broadcasting the e-ticket and an associated answer set in a second answer set, upon receipt of the broadcast; and
 - e) rejecting the e-ticket if the answer set is a subset of the second answer set,
~~wherein steps a) through e) are performed to validate the e-ticket and S_i has not received its own broadcast.~~
7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the e-ticket represents a prior reservation of goods or services.
8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the e-ticket contains no information specifically identifying the owner.
9. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein broadcasts are performed in accordance with a selected one of a pure atomic broadcast, a general broadcast, a CT-broadcast, and an OPT-broadcast protocol.
10. (currently amended) A method of validating an e-ticket, comprising the steps of:
 - a) sending the e-ticket from an initial receiving server S_i to a plurality of servers including S_i , wherein each server returns an answer indicative of whether that server previously answered any inquiry for the e-ticket;
 - b) selecting a conflict mode if at least one selected server of a majority of servers answered a previous inquiry for the e-ticket; and

c) selecting a conflict-free mode if none of the majority of servers has answered any previous inquiry for the e-ticket, wherein steps a), b), and c) are performed to validate the e-ticket and wherein step b) further comprises the steps of:

- i) broadcasting the e-ticket and the answer set to the plurality of servers; and
- ii) collecting the identity of any server S_k broadcasting the e-ticket and an associated answer set in a second answer set; and
- iii) rejecting the e-ticket if the answer set is a subset of the second answer set, upon receipt of the broadcast; and wherein step b) (ii) is repeated as long as S_i has not received its own broadcast and there is no server S_k in the second answer set such that the associated answer set \subseteq the second answer set in order to validate the e-ticket.

11. (original) The method of claim 10 wherein step c) further comprises the step of:

- i) accepting the e-ticket.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of:

- d) collecting the identities of the answering servers in an answer set.

13. (canceled)

14. (canceled)

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of accepting the e-ticket if S_i receives its own broadcast and the answer set \subseteq the second answer set.

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of rejecting the e-ticket if S_i has received its own broadcast and the answer set is not a subset of the second answer set.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of:

d) rejecting the e-ticket if the answer set \subseteq the second answer set and S_i has not received its own broadcast.

18. (original) The method of claim 10 wherein the e-ticket represents a prior reservation of goods or services.

19. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein broadcasts are performed in accordance with a selected one of a pure atomic broadcast, a general broadcast, a CT-broadcast, and an OPT-broadcast protocol.